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*Part 1 of this series described Celiac Disease and how it can be treated. Part 2 is a little more personal. Since discovering I have the disease over eleven years ago, a lot about my life has had to change. Not only did I have to relearn how to eat, I had to teach myself all the ins and outs: what was forbidden, dealing with the psychological effects, learn how to ask questions and continually educate myself, and those close to me, about it.*

I was raised in the Midwest, in a family where you basically ate what was put in front of you. When I was a teenager, I announced that I was becoming a Vegetarian...my mom and grandmother both decried that I was going to die. So, later when I tried to explain about Celiacs—I felt like an outcast. They eat a lot of bread and baked goods and oatmeal in my



family. So, that really limited me when at family affairs.

When I was first made aware that I have Celiacs it was at a time when I had become really ill; I was reacting to everything in some awful way or another. After eliminating all the things I was reacting to I felt like a new person. For the first time in my life I was actually able to lose weight and keep it off. My skin cleared up (I had bad break-outs which befuddled dermatologists during my teen years-today it's one of the signs I have consumed something I shouldn't have) and the upper-respiratory issues I was plagued with most of my life, went away.

I have learned so much but, alas, am only human. I fell off the rocker really hard last year and am still feeling the effects. I was trying this whole “mind over body” thing...and did it while on a trip to Rome and kept going when I got back. By February I was a plain mess, internally and externally. Mind, body and spirit had all hit rock bottom. So...I picked myself back up after a self pep talk and started over. I had no choice.

Often, people in my life just do not get what I am afflicted with. The worst thing anyone close to me could ever do (short of deliberately feeding me gluten)—complain about what a pain in the butt my disease is. It happens and when it does, it's [emotionally] painful for me. Seriously folks, my response, “who do you think it's more of a pain in the butt for, you or me?” And if you have Celiacs you know this statement is a double entendre!

But the bright side is, if you are crafty or entertaining enough...you can make people feel more comfortable with it by finding the humor. I was in a theatre company for a while and grew pretty friendly with some of my fellow thespians; too often when we would go out to eat for cast parties the big fun would be the “shh, shh...Stacey is going to order” because they new that ‘twenty questions’ with the server would ensue; they wanted to hear whether I ended up with a salad or an actual meal. Plus, they liked to be silly about it, which was cool because it made me feel like I wasn't being a pain.



But, it's not easy. Nor is it cheap. If I want to eat pasta, I have to pay double or triple the price of regular wheat pasta. Same with bread—which I totally gave up after a while; gluten-free bread is ridiculously expensive. I have learned to consume, and be pretty healthy with my diet, by consuming as fresh as possible. I eat a lot of fruit, vegetables, rice, quinoa, beans/legumes, and soy. I eat fish too, but not as often as I used to; going back to being vegetarian is something I am trying to attain but therein lies the malnutrition and not getting enough protein is a big factor in that decision.

Luckily, I love to cook! I can get pretty creative with vegetables. One thing I enjoy is discovering new products. Recently while doing some research and postings for *attribute*—Seth Mendelsohn, owner and creator of [Simply Boulder Culinary Sauces](#), contacted us. Simply Boulder produces a gluten-free product. I have always been interested in hearing the thoughts from the other side of the spectrum, from a manufacturing perspective.



Mendelsohn was kind enough to grant me an interview. The question burning in my mind was, “What would make you want to produce a gluten-free line of sauces?” His response was purely motivational, “I wanted to create healthy, delicious products so as many people as possible can enjoy them.”

Simply Boulder launched in October 2007 and unlike companies who realized late in the game that consumers with Celiacs and those switching to a gluten-free diet were a big market, Mendelsohn began Simply Boulder completely gluten-free. He revealed that his own mother has been wheat-free for years, though this was not the driving force in his decision. He did his research about the market even attending [Celiac Sprue Association](#) (CSA) events and meetings in his area; his findings made his decision easy from both a business and conscience standpoint.

Thus leading him to the challenge of acquiring the coveted CSA recognition seal, which Mendelsohn explains on his [blog](#):

*“First of all, the seal isn’t a certification. It’s a recognition seal that the Celiac Sprue Association gives to products that meet their strict standards.*

*It took us less than a month to get approved for the seal. I think it took less time than most companies since prior to applying for the seal we were very diligent with our procedures and sourcing gluten free ingredients. The first step of applying was sending the CSA our processes and procedures for the manufacturing process. We had to explain in detail how we prevent cross contamination.*

*The second step of applying is to make sure that no products contain gluten. Normally they request samples that they test in the lab. They can’t do this with our products since they contain vinegar and/or tamari. Apparently the fermentation and distilled process of these two ingredients can create false negatives if gluten is present. So, instead of testing we handed over gluten free statements from all of our suppliers...”*

As with many companies, to cut costs, he shares processing space with other manufacturers. When asked about his manufacturing and ensuring his products are in fact being produced as

cleanly as he expected Mendelsohn said he is adamant about it. “All of our ingredients are stored separately from all the other’s used in the processing facility. Whenever we start production, I am there every day watching over the line. I make sure it is cleaned and sanitized thoroughly beforehand. I watch to be certain only our ingredients are being used and watch the handling of the product. This is how I have peace of mind that my products are as clean as expected.”

Just knowing that there are companies out there who truly care about the health of the consumer, gives me peace of mind!

Other companies that have been in existence for a long time and have always been gluten-free include [Ener-G Foods](#) and [WholeSoy](#). I can vouch for the products as I have been consuming them for years. I haven’t found alternatives to several of Ener-G’s products such as Rice Bran and Egg Replacer. Whole Soy has the best tasting soy yogurt option I have tasted in the USA. Whole Foods brand 365 has great gluten-free BBQ potato chips too. I am also happy to report that Rice Chex are now gluten-free and have the CSA seal of approval!



Also, [Bragg's](#) make the best product on my shelf: pure soy sauce! They have expanded their product base over the years to include marinades and salad dressings.

My heart beat a little faster the day I discovered that [Desert Essence](#) now has an entire line of beauty products that are gluten-free. Their line of shampoos and conditioners, are incredible and have had such a great effect on my hair! It is shinier and healthier than ever before. I plan to try their body wash soon. I used [Giovanni](#) hair products in the past; their body washes are also nice. I am a long-time fan of [Kiss My Face](#) toothpaste and moisturizers.

I hope you have found this article informative. There are many resources and to be quite frank, your General Practitioner may not have a clue what Celiacs is—so there is a lot of self-teaching involved; a good nutritionist or naturopathic physician are your best bets for help with your dietary needs. I was compelled to share my knowledge hoping I can help someone out there find answers and resources. Gluten-free eating equals happy intestines!